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THE AMERICAN DREAM--TWO HUNDRED YEARS YOUNG

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN HAS THESE THOUGHTS AS AMERICANS CELEBRATE ON THE FOURTH OF JULY THEIR BICENTENNIAL AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION.

VOICE: A GROUP OF FIFTY-SIX MEN GATHERED IN A ROOM OF THE STATE HOUSE IN PHILADELPHIA TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO (SUNDAY). AFTER MANY WEEKS OF DISCUSSION AND EVEN WRANGLING, THEY HAD REACHED A DECISION--TO APPROVE A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FOR BRITAIN'S THIRTEEN COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA. THEY CAME FROM VARIED BACKGROUNDS--SOME WERE FARMERS, LANDOWNERS, LAWYERS, DOCTORS, FINANCIERS, CLERGYMEN, MERCHANTS -- ONE OF THEM WAS A SEA CAPTAIN, ANOTHER A FORMER INDENTURED SERVANT. MOST WERE SELF-MADE MEN. ALL REPRESENTED AN ELITE AMONG THEIR FELLOW-COLONISTS IN TERMS OF WEALTH OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THEY REPRESENTED WHAT ONE OF THEM, JOHN ADAMS OF MASSACHUSETTS ADMITTED WAS A MINORITY OF THE COLONISTS--ONE-THIRD. THE OTHER TWO-THIRDS WERE DIVIDED BETWEEN COLONISTS LOYAL TO THE BRITISH CROWN, AND THOSE WHO WERE NEUTRAL IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE COLONIES AND BRITAIN THAT ALREADY WAS A YEAR OLD. AMONG THE MEN GATHERED IN THE STATE HOUSE SOME WERE FRIGHTENED AT WHAT THEY WERE ABOUT TO DO. ALL WERE AWED--AND DETERMINED TO CARRY THROUGH THEIR TASK, EVEN THOUGH THEY RISKED DEATH FOR TREASON UNDER BRITISH LAW. BUT, AS THE DOCUMENT BEFORE THEM SAYS IN ITS FINAL WORDS, THEY HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO "MUTUALLY PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES AND OUR SACRED HONOUR."

THEIR DECISION TOUCHED OFF REPERCUSSIONS THAT ARE STILL FELT--NOT ONLY IN THE COUNTRY IT CREATED, BUT IN NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD. THAT DOCUMENT EMBODIED TIMELESS DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. THEY STRETCH

AS FAR BACK AS THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS PLATO, SOCRATES AND PARTICULARLY ARISTOTLE. AT LEAST SOME OF THOSE PRINCIPLES FOUND EXPRESSIONS IN ROMAN LAW AND THE WORKS OF SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BRITISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN AND SPANISH PHILOSOPHERS AND POLITICAL THINKERS. THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OWE MUCH TO THE WRITINGS OF THE ENGLISHMAN JOHN LOCKE. IF THE MAIN THRUST OF THE DECLARATION CAN BE SUMMARIZED, IT SAYS IN EFFECT THAT GOVERNMENT WITHOUT REPRESENTATION IS TYRANNY, AND THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE SACRED DUTY TO REVOLT AGAINST TYRANNY IN DEFENSE OF THEIR GOD-GIVEN, UNALIENABLE RIGHTS. AND THE DECLARATION SUMS UP THESE RIGHTS AS "LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

(OPT) THE CONCEPT CONTAINED IN THE DECLARATION FIRED THE IMAGINATIONS OF MEN FAR REMOVED FROM THE THIRTEEN COLONIES--MEN SUCH AS KOSSUTH, THE HUNGARIAN PATRIOT; PULASKI, THE POLISH CAVALRY LEADER UNDER WASHINGTON; THE GERMAN VON STEUBEN, WASHINGTON'S DRILL-MASTER; THE FRENCHMEN LAFAYETTE, ROCHAMBEAU, D'ESTAING--A NAME FAMILIAR IN OUR TIMES BECAUSE OF HIS DESCENDANT--THE SPANIARD GALVEZ, THE LIBERATOR OF THE COLONIES' SOUTHERN FLANK; AND THE VENEZUELAN MIRANDA, MENTOR OF SIMON BOLIVAR, SOUTH AMERICA'S GREAT LIBERATOR. ALL THESE, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, CARRIED THE CONCEPT TO THEIR LANDS--SOME WITH SUCCESS, OTHERS WITHOUT. AND IN MODERN ASIA, AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE THE THOUGHT BEHIND THE WORDS OF THE DECLARATION LIVES ON. (END OPT)

THAT CONCEPT (ALSO) LIVES ON IN THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THE DECISION TAKEN IN PHILADELPHIA TWO CENTURIES AGO IS REFLECTED IN THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE, WITH ITS CHARACTERISTIC PASSION FOR IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE. THAT DECISION STILL LIVES IN THE TREMENDOUS BODY OF LAWS WHICH HAVE TRIED TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE WORDS "LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"--IN SUCH AREAS, FOR INSTANCE AS CIVIL RIGHTS. THERE HAVE BEEN SETBACKS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS ALONG THE ROAD, BUT THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SUCCESSES FAR OUTWEIGHING THEM. THE WORK GOES ON, AND THE AGENDA IS LONG -- BUT THE WORK GOES ON.

IN SUM, WHILE THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IS LONG OVER, THE REVOLUTION IS NOT.

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